

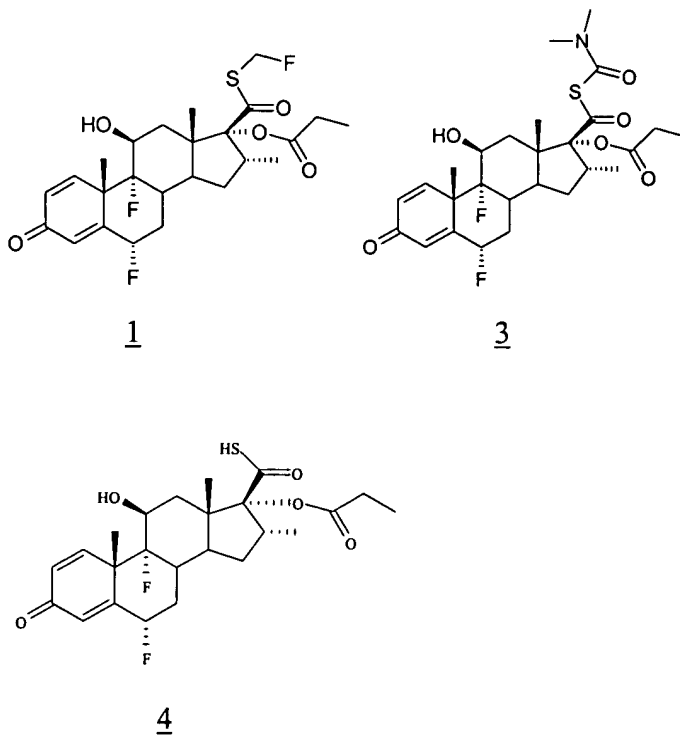
Amendments to the claims:

Please cancel claims 1-31 and add new claims 32-50. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

32. (new) A process for the preparation of S-fluoromethyl 6 α ,9 α -difluoro-11 β -hydroxy-16 α -methyl-17 α -propionyloxy-3-oxoandrosta-1,4-diene-17 β -carbothioate, a compound of formula 1, comprising

- (a) treating the compound of formula 3 with alkali metal carbonate-alcohol system to obtain the compound of formula 4;
- (b) reacting the compound of formula 4 with bromofluoromethane to obtain the compound of formula 1.



33. (new) The process as claimed in claim 32, wherein the alkali metal carbonate is potassium carbonate.

34. (new) The process as claimed in claim 32, wherein the alcohol is an alkanol containing 1 to 3 carbons.

35. (new) The process as claimed in claim 34, wherein the alcohol is a linear alkanol.

36. (new) The process as claimed in claim 35, wherein the linear alkanol is methanol.

37. (new) The process as claimed in claim 32, wherein the mole ratio of alkali metal carbonate to the compound of formula 3 is between the range of 1:1 to 10:1.

38. (new) The process as claimed in claim 37, wherein the mole ratio of alkali metal carbonate to the compound of formula 3 is 1.5:1.

39. (new) The process as claimed in claim 32, wherein the compound of formula 3 is treated with alkali metal carbonate-alcohol system at a temperature between the range of about 0°C to about 100°C.

40. (new) The process as claimed in claim 39, wherein the compound of formula 3 is treated with alkali metal carbonate-alcohol system at a temperature between the range of about 20°C to about 30°C.

41. (new) The process as claimed in claim 32, wherein reaction of the compound of formula 4 with bromofluoromethane is carried out at a temperature below about 15°C.

42. (new) The process as claimed in claim 41, wherein reaction of the compound of formula 4 with bromofluoromethane is carried out at a temperature between the range of about -5°C to about 0°C.

43. (new) The process as claimed in claim 32, wherein the alkali metal carbonate-alcohol system is potassium carbonate-methanol.
44. (new) The process as claimed in claim 32, wherein the mole ratio of bromofluoromethane to the compound of formula 4 is between the range of 1:1 to 10:1.
45. (new) The process as claimed in claim 44, wherein the mole ratio of bromofluoromethane to the compound of formula 4 is 1.3:1.
46. (new) The process as claimed in claim 32, wherein reaction of the compound of formula 4 with bromofluoromethane is carried out in ketone solvent.
47. (new) The process as claimed in claim 46, wherein the ketone solvent is acetone.
48. (new) The process as claimed in claim 32, wherein the compound of formula 3 is prepared by reacting $6\alpha,9\alpha$ -difluoro- 11β -hydroxy- 16α -methyl-3-oxo- 17α -(propionyloxy) androsta-1,4-dien- 17β -carboxylic acid, a compound of formula 2, with N,N-dimethylthiocarbamoyl chloride in an inert aprotic solvent in the presence of an iodide catalyst and a base.
49. (new) The process as claimed in claim 48, wherein the inert aprotic solvent is an ether and the mole ratio of the iodide catalyst to the compound of formula 2 is 0.1:1.
50. (new) The process as claimed in claim 48 wherein the inert aprotic solvent is tetrahydrofuran, the iodide catalyst is tetrabutylammonium iodide, the base is triethylamine and the reaction is carried out at temperature between the range of about 0°C to about 25°C.